

History of Courtenay Public Schools

THE intelligence and moral status of a community is usually well estimated from the amount of interest manifested in the public schools. One of the first questions propounded by an intelligent man as he thinks of locating in a community is concerning the facilities for education in the locality. One of the first institutions planted upon our eastern coast upon the landing of the founders of our government was the school for the training of the rising generation. Said they, "Intelligence and morality being necessary for good citizenship we do provide and establish the means for securing an education."

Colleges and schools for higher learning were planted and have ever since been fostered. The American people usually stand firmly for the public school and resent any attempt to detract from its exalted position among our governmental institutions.

The example set by New England has been taken up and adopted in every part of the country.

As the newer west became occupied by settlers the same spirit of loyalty to education was carried with them. Some of the very best systems of education adopted by individual states is to be found in the west. North Dakota is fortunate in possessing a system equal to any of the older states and it is being worked out year by year and the state is destined to possess splendid schools from limit to limit. In the newer districts the first schools were often taught in shacks or other rude buildings where but a few children could be found of school age and many is the school that has been taught day after day with but a half dozen or fewer pupils.

The writer recalls the incident of the first school he ever visited in the state. He was driving with some friends in one of the newer counties and coming to a small village noticed a cozy little school building in the edge of the little town and desired to look in and see how a school appeared in North Dakota. He made his presence known at the door and a clever appearing pedagogue in-

vited him to enter. There was found to be but one pupil at school that day. Upon expressing surprise at not finding more pupils the teacher remarked that it was not an uncommon experience in this particular school to have but one pupil for the entire day. That very same teacher is now serving as superintendent of the schools of the county referred to.

North Dakota has been fortunate in having men of ability and broad training at the head of her educational affairs. Hon. Joseph M. Devine did much to advance the standing of the schools of the state. The same may be said of the present incumbent of that high office. During the administration of Hon. W. L. Stockwell much has been done in the way of better school buildings, better teachers and better wages for teachers. Each year more attention is being given to the comfort and beauty of these universities of the people, the public schools.



I. N. VAN TASSEL,
Principal Courtenay's Public School

The New Washington school district was organized in 1883. The district included what is now Courtenay and Corinne townships and the two congressional townships west of them, New Washington and Nogosek. The notices for holding the first election of directors were posted March 4, 1883. The election was held March 15. E. F. Horn, our townsman, was chosen director, George Gray, clerk, and Robert Gray, treasurer. Only four or five votes were cast at the election. The board held a meeting May 11, and selected a site for a school house. The building was located three miles south and one and one-half miles east of Courtenay, or where Courtenay now stands, and was placed on the northwest corner of section 27. The contract for building the school house was let to Peter Aubertin. The house was 28 feet by 28 feet with an 8 by 16 foot vestibule. The school building stood where built until 1894 when it was moved to Courtenay and located where the present school building stands. By this time the Soo road had been built and Courtenay had been